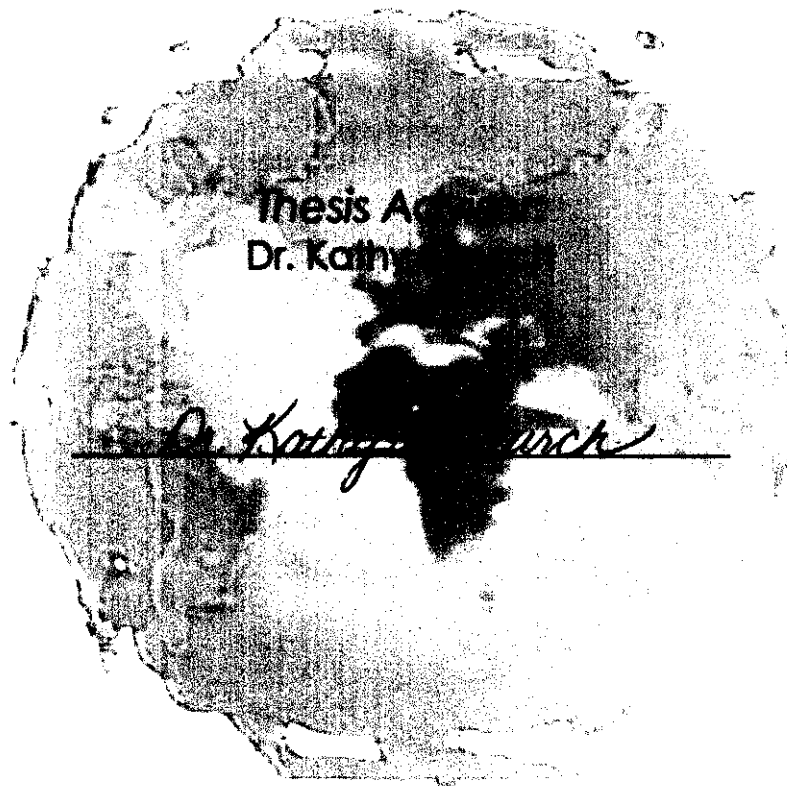


Education: A Mission around the World

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

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Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

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Abstract

This project was designed to take a deeper look into the role and purpose of teachers in the missionary field. In researching types of schools around the world, two types of schools were generally in existence. For this study, two missionary sites were selected from Central and South America. One school in Bolivia serves as a place of education for children of missionaries as well as local people. Another school in Honduras is operated by a local church and ministers to the children of three Honduran cities. The information gathered from these schools serves as means of providing a clearer picture of what a teacher in the missionary field encounters on a daily basis. A person interested in pursuing this occupation would likely find himself in a school structured like either one of these schools, and examining the structure, foundation, beliefs, and accreditation of these schools was an essential portion of each section of the project.

Gracias. Merci. Thanks.

Many people were essential to me in accomplishing the goal of completing this thesis project. I enjoyed every moment visiting with people, reading emails, and researching this topic.

I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Kathy Church, my thesis advisor, on this project. She was able to offer valuable information and insight in getting me started. Her support and encouragement meant much more to me than I ever expected. She is commended for taking the time out of her schedule to work with me this semester. She is a wonderful teacher, servant, and person!

Special thanks go to Ann Seaney, a missionary for World Gospel Missions, for her help getting information about Bolivia. Millie Rogers, a missionary for La Reunión del Señor (a church in Honduras), also was a major contributor to this project. Both ladies were very willing and helpful in sharing their experiences as missionary teachers. Know you are in my thoughts and prayers. May the Lord continue to bless and keep you!

Special thanks go to Kari Jones for her advice throughout the semester. I would also like to thank Kevin DuBois for his willingness to help in several ways during the time spent with this thesis. I am very grateful for my pastors, Scott and Brigit Bogard, for their constant prayers and encouragement. I am also grateful to them for finding the doors to open and for the opportunity to go to Honduras in March! Finally, I would like to thank my parents, who do much more than I ever think. I am very glad that God gave them to me. Their love and support mean everything to me.

Faiako. El maestro.
Enseignant. Lehrer. Leraar.
L'insegnante. These words
from other languages are all
used to name a person who
touches many lives each
day: a teacher. Students



Photo taken at La Reunión
del Señor, March 2003

around the globe call them by different
names, but all are influential people in
these children's lives. Some of the
people who play the most important role
in a child's life are the educators that
child encounters on a daily basis. These
people are men and women, young and
old, veteran and inexperienced
instructors who work with students every
day, instilling the value of education into
their lives. Webster's New World
Compact School and Office Dictionary
defines the word *teach* as "1. to show or
help (a person) to learn (*how*) to do
something 2. to give lessons (to a

student, etc.) 3. to give
lessons in (a subject) 4. to
provide with knowledge,
insight, etc." (1995). These
definitions better elaborate
on what a *teacher* is, beyond
simply "one who teaches"

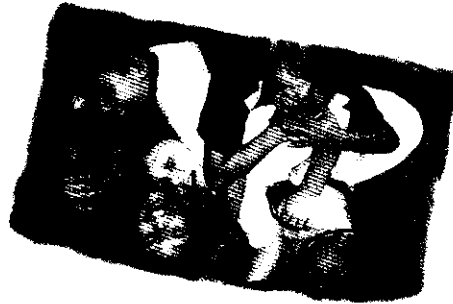
(1995). Educators in formal and informal
settings worldwide embody these
definitions each time they present
something new to a pupil. Because
learning is essential to life, teachers are
indispensable, and they are often
unforgettable in the eyes of their
students.

Ko Ha Talasekau. El misionero.
Missionar. Missionnaire. Missionaris. Il
missionario. Other countries have
different names for missionaries, but their
impact and message is the same in many
lands. The word *missionary* produces a
variety of images in the mind. They are

found all over the world, serving various purposes and in different capacities.

Some are short term, others long term. Some hear and answer their call immediately while others do not realize they are called to this field until after they become established in their careers and communities. Webster's defines *missionary* as "a person sent on a religious mission" (1995). *Mission* is defined as

1. a sending out or being sent out to perform a special service
2. a group of persons sent by a religious body to spread its religion, esp. in a foreign land
3. a diplomatic delegation
4. a group of technicians, specialists, etc, sent to a foreign country
5. the special duty for which one is sent
6. a



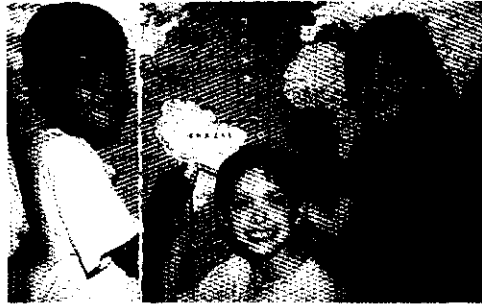
Students at SCCLC
GMU, SAM, and WGM,
2002

special task to which one devotes one's life: calling (1995).

Missionaries can be found all over the world

in a variety of situations. Many live in the United States, working in inner-cities, Native American Reservations, and impoverished areas. Others are found in China, secretly and carefully spreading their religious beliefs. Some missionaries live in the country to which they have been called for an extended period of time, only returning to their home lands on occasion, but their desires are to minister to the needs of the people in that nation. Others serve on a more temporary basis, traveling to and building an orphanage, planting a church, or evangelizing to the local people. As the definition indicates, most often missionaries are spreading their own religious beliefs, educating the people of

their faith, meeting their needs in some capacity, and bringing aid to those facing strife.



Students at SCCLC
GMU, SAM, and WGM,
2002

ways uncommonly seen in public schools. In investigating two particular schools, the

The amazing aspect of

impact missionary teachers

have in the lives of their students

both the teaching and missionary fields is how beautifully they can be incorporated. Many missionaries around the world are completing their service in the form of being an educator to the children of the region. Most operate in conjunction with a private, church-based school staffed with missionary teachers. Still others work in a more individual setting, teaching in a local tribe or village. Whatever the situation may be, these people play an important role in reaching the lives of others in the name of their God. Christian missionaries are able to incorporate the teachings of Jesus into their classroom instruction, and see young lives dedicated to their Lord in

and community becomes evident. The role of the missionary teacher is one of great importance, and the need for these teachers around the world is even greater.

BOLIVIA

A young boy awakens early in the morning. He rolls out of his bed, splashes some cool water on his face, changes his clothes, and runs out the door, saying good-bye to his mother as he runs down the street. Another day of school is about to begin. This boy's school is unlike most schools in his city, however. As a child of two missionaries, this boy attends the Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. How is this school

different from the other schools in Spanish-speaking Santa Cruz? The first noticeable



Teachers at SCCLC
GMU, SAM, and WGM,
2002

difference to a stranger entering one of the school's seventeen

classrooms is that everyone, student and teacher alike, is speaking English. Many of the other students in his class are also children of missionaries, and a brief look around the classroom gives a sampling of cultures from around the world. There are students from one end of the earth to the other (Seaney, November 18, 2002).

At the foot of the Andes Mountains, Santa Cruz is a central location for many missionaries in Bolivia. It has a population in excess of 900,000 people, and is the fastest growing city in Bolivia. Though Bolivia is considered a third world country, Santa Cruz offers pharmacies, medical clinics, super-markets, cable television,

internet service, and fast food restaurants (Gospel Missionary Union [GMU], South

America Mission [SAM], and World Gospel Mission [WGM],

2002). People from all over the world have traveled here to evangelize the nation and teach people here about Jesus Christ. The Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center was founded in 1977 to provide for the educational needs of the missionary children. There were other schools for missionary children in Bolivia, but they were very far away, and the expense of sending children there was far too great. The founders of this school had the vision to create a place where children could receive a quality Christian education that would later be accepted by higher institutions in North America. The school is accredited by the

Association of Christian Schools
International so that classes are



Logo of World Gospel
Mission
GMU, SAM, and WGM,
2002

learning institution from pre-
kindergarten through twelfth grade,

recognized by other
educational institutions

with an average of fourteen
students in each classroom.

around the world (Seaney, November 18,
2002). Missionary families are sometimes
moved to other countries, and this
accreditation helps transfer classes the
child has taken to their new school.

The school sits on six acres of land and
has been in a building completed in
1983. Additions have been made over
the years, resulting in facilities
comparable to many schools found in
English-speaking countries. With
computer and science labs, a library,
and auditorium/gymnasium inside,
playgrounds, a basketball court, and
most importantly, a well-worn soccer field
outside, the school is better equipped
than most in Bolivia (GMU, SAM, and
WGM, 2002).

Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center
does not offer education for a single
group of missionaries, but it provides for
more than thirty evangelical missions
throughout Bolivia. While fifty-one
percent of the student body is comprised
of missionary children, the remaining
forty-nine percent of the student
population is from the local community
(GMU, SAM, and WGM, 2002). Since its
formation in 1977, the school has grown
from thirty-four students to nearly two
hundred in recent years (Dubois, 2002).
All grade levels are represented at this

Three major missions sponsor the
Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center and
the missionaries who are sent to work at
the school: Gospel Missionary Union
(Kansas City, Missouri), South America
Mission (Lake Worth, Florida), and World

Gospel Mission (Marion, Indiana). It is through the World Gospel Mission that one particular missionary teacher, Ann Seaney, learned about



Ann Seaney, 1999
WGM, 2003

the position in Bolivia over twelve years ago. Ann was attending Olivet Nazarene University when God called her to be a missionary. She knew that she was being called to be a teacher, and her passion for Jesus led her to combine her callings in Santa Cruz. Via email, Ann states, "I had always wanted to be a teacher, and He [God] provided just the right place for me here" (Seaney, November 17, 2002).

Currently a second grade teacher, Ann has found much joy in serving in the capacity which she does (Seaney, November 28, 2002). Ann has discovered that though Bolivia is in a heavily evangelized area of the world, there are still many people here who have never

heard the name of Jesus Christ spoken or what it really means to be a Christian. While the predominant religion of Bolivia is Roman Catholicism, many

people only claim to belong to

the church for cultural reasons and do not really know or understand what Christianity entails (Dubois, 2002). As a member of a Bolivian church in Santa Cruz, Ann is active in teaching Sunday School and is involved in Women's Ministries, which is all taught in Spanish. She feels blessed to be able to not only serve in her school, but in the capacity she does at her church as well (Seaney, November 17, 2002). One of the most rewarding aspects of her position is that she is able to freely express her faith in her school and incorporate this into her instruction. She has also been blessed to see many people come to know Jesus as their Savior, the primary goal of Ann's

mission here in
Bolivia (Seaney,
November 28, 2002).
Another teacher
rejoices in the fact
that, "At some point



Photo taken of Agape
Christian Academy, San
Pedro Sula, March 2003

in their education at SCCLC
(Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center),
nearly all of the students, Bolivian and
others, receive Christ as their personal
Savior" (Dubois, 2002). Seeing this as a
fruit of their labors makes everything
worth it.

HONDURAS

A young girl awakens early in the
morning. She rolls out of her bed,
splashes some cool water on her face,
puts on her uniform, and runs out the
door, saying good-bye to her mother as
she runs down the street. Another day of
school is about to begin. Like the
missionary school in Bolivia, her school is

taught only in English.

All students in
Honduras, whether
they attend a public
or private institution,
wear uniforms to

school. Students can easily

be identified by their uniforms, and at this
girl's school, the Agape Christian
Academy, the teachers wear uniforms as
well (Rogers, March 9, 2003).

The Agape Christian Academy,
located in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, is
one of three schools run by La Reunión
del Señor, a nondenominational Christian
congregation. This church has three
separate church buildings in three cities
throughout the country. Each church
operates an Agape Christian Academy
as a ministry through the church. The
school in Progreso, Honduras, is the oldest
of the three schools. Students attend this
school from preschool through eleventh

grade, after which they graduate. The school in Progreso is in a separate building from the church.



Photo taken of Agape
Christian Academy,
Progreso, March 2003

Classrooms are small, but all

needs of the students are met. Each

school has a computer lab, physical education area, and classrooms for each grade level. The school in San Pedro Sula is still in its growing stages, and it currently educates students preschool aged though ninth grade. Millie's school in San Pedro Sula used to be a hospital, but it now houses the school and church. It will continue to grow as the ninth graders continue to progress. This particular school has been doubling in size for the past two years, and similar growth is expected for the next year as well. The newest school has not officially begun; it is still in the developmental stages this year. It will be located in Morazan, a very

small mountain town.

These schools are not institutions solely for missionary children, rather they are an

outreach of the church

(Rogers, March 9, 2003).

San Pedro Sula is the second largest city in Honduras, home to 471,000 people. Progreso is the third largest city with 109,400 people, and the population of the mountain village of Morazan is unknown. Like Bolivia, the primary religion of Honduras is Roman Catholicism (Ediciones Ramses, 2002). Most people in this country celebrate the common Christian holidays, but do not truly have a relationship with Jesus. The missionaries at Agape Christian Academy train young people to be missionaries in their own communities through chapel services at the school as well as in their daily instruction. The faculty and students here

are passionate about seeing people have a relationship with Jesus Christ. They are currently in the process of being accredited by Oral Roberts



Photo taken of Millie Rogers, March 2003

University, which teachers say is

a blessing. Many high school students here have a desire to obtain a higher level of education, and many of these students choose to study in the United States following graduation.

Accreditation will make this dream easier to achieve (Rogers, March 9, 2003).

Not all teachers at Agape are missionaries; some are local people simply employed as an educator. The missionaries at all Agape Christian Academies hold responsibilities in the church outside of school. Millie Rogers, a 2002 Ball State University graduate, is one of these missionaries. Her day often begins at 3:30 a.m. when she rises to get ready to go to early morning prayer

before school begins. The faculty devotes much of their time preparing for each day in prayer and personal Bible study before the students arrive. Millie says that prayer is what holds

everything together there. Millie and the other missionaries, most of who are from the United States, do not end their day when school lets out; they are busy attending church functions throughout the week, leading cell groups, and preparing events for the next school day. March was Missions Month for the school, and each classroom had a different country to study and pray for during the entire month. At the end of the month, parents brought in food from each of the nations represented and the school was able to have a fundraiser selling the food and enjoying the cuisine (Rogers, March 9, 2003). Though the school is able to enjoy many of the benefits of a public

school, they are still in desperate need of books of all kinds. The expense of purchasing updated textbooks for



Physical Education at Agape, Photo taken March 2003

the school is outrageous, and obtaining enough of the

same text for a classroom is difficult as well. As does the school have its high and low points, so do many of the people who serve here. In a recent e-mail, Millie addressed some of her most gratifying and difficult experiences. One of the rewarding experiences for Millie has dealt with her own personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. She has found that she needs to listen carefully to the voice of the Holy Spirit in all she does to make any decision, and though this has not been easy at all times, it has made her time in Honduras fruitful. The challenge is ever present, and it is a part of her daily life, but she is prepared to accept the

challenges that come her direction (Rogers, April 8, 2003).

WHY TEACHERS?

"Teaching may seem 'ordinary,' but in missions it is in short supply, and teachers

can be the critical factor in an entire ministry" (Caswell, 2001). When most people think of a missionary, a teacher is generally not the first picture that comes to mind. People think of Bible translators, evangelists, preachers, or traveling groups. The value of teachers and other support personnel is often overlooked in the missionary field. Says David Turner, a high school teacher for Wycliffe in Guatemala,

Without support people to take care of the needs of translators and church planters, the work would not get done. My father was a Bible translator in Ecuador. I

grew up as a MK
(missionary kid)
deep in the
Amazon jungle in
the most primitive



Photo of Agape's
preschool, March
2003

conditions. I remember
one day, when I was six or
seven years old, my dad telling me,
"It takes 80% of my time just to
survive here." That time was spent
fixing the thatched roof, killing and
plucking the chicken for our
dinner, and all the other things one
must do to survive in the wild.
Because support people
eventually took over those kinds of
tasks, he finished the translation in
the mid-1970s. Were it not for
support people he might still be
working on that translation (1997).

Because education is highly valued to
most missionary families, many are
reluctant to go into this field if there will

not be a place for their
children to go to school.
However, teaching
missionaries do not view
teaching as their "job;"

it is their ministry. While some
ministries are blessed enough to

provide an income for their teachers,
often missionary teachers do not receive
a salary. Teachers are expected to raise
their support through a church group or
individuals; however, they have faith that
if they are to be there, the money will
come. Having the opportunity to
influence and lead students into a
relationship with Christ in the midst of
instructing them in math, science, and
language is what makes the position
rewarding. Money is not the focus of
going to work every day. The only
problem is the lack of people willing to
follow this call (Turner, 1997).

At the beginning of the school year, the Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center in Bolivia was still in desperate

need of five teachers to fill open classrooms (Dubois,

2002). The school has already evaluated its personnel needs for the upcoming years as well. In the 2003-2004 school year, twelve teaching positions will be vacant, and there will still be need for a chaplain and school nurse. The following school year has just as much need for positions to be filled. The school is willing to accept people on a short-term (one to two years) or long term basis, and while getting people to commit to short-term service is not difficult, the school would like to see more people choose to remain on a long term basis. This would foster consistency in their program, but they realize it is not always possible (Seaney, November 18, 2002).



Photo of Miss Houston, another missionary teacher at Agape, March 2003

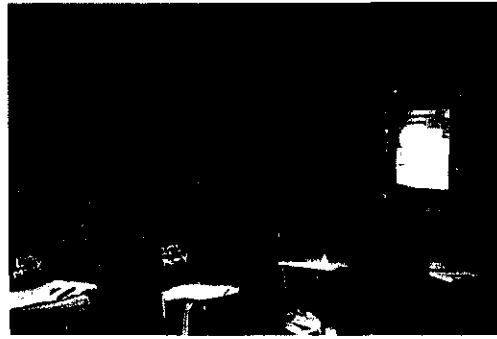
One difference the Agape Christian Academy schools in Honduras have with schools in the United

States is that only three of the teachers are actually

licensed teachers – Millie, the principal, and a local teacher. At the beginning of the school year, Millie conducted a brief overview of teaching techniques to give the teachers some hints on effective teaching strategies. Like a first year of teaching anywhere, Millie says she has learned so much in this year, much more than anyone can be prepared for!

Sarah, one missionary who teaches fourth grade, graduated from an Ohio college with a degree in public relations, a fact that has not impeded her effectiveness as a teacher or a missionary. The need for teachers here is very great, especially with the student body size is growing so rapidly. Because these schools are

growing so quickly, the need for teachers here is rising as well (Rogers, March 9, 2003).



Inside an eleventh grade
classroom in Progreso
Photo taken March 2003

The month of March brought a group of sixteen short-term missionaries to San Pedro Sula, including two college students studying to become elementary teachers. All the teachers at the Agape Christian Academies were eager to share their testimonies with the group, and every member of the group was greatly encouraged to return to Honduras in the future to teach at the school. The trip proved to be an eye-opening experience for all who went, and many are planning to return next year. The children made an impact on each life and heart.

Sacrifice is something that anyone going into the missionary field must experience to some degree. For Millie,

leaving behind her family has been difficult to handle. After the initial time period in the new country, she has learned

to adjust and find comfort in her new life, friends, and church family in Honduras. She has traveled home on occasion as well, which makes the adjustment smoother (Rogers, March 9, 2003).

When asked if answering the call has been worth it for her, Millie states, "Absolutely! [It has been] extremely hard, but I'm not going to turn out like Jonah," (Rogers, April 8, 2003) a person in the Bible who ran from his calling.

Around the globe, young children awaken early in the morning. They roll out of their beds, splash some cool water on their faces, put on their clothes, and run out the door, saying good-bye to their mothers as they run down the street.

Another day at the missionary school is about to begin. The children are very grateful for those people standing at the classroom door as they enter; grateful that they are not only there to

teach the students. They have submitted to their calling to be a part of the Great Commission, as stated in Mark 16: 15 of the Bible. "And He [Jesus] said to them, Go into all the world and preach and



Artwork by Kevin DuBois,
March 2003

publish openly the Good News to every creature [of the whole human race]." Because of the faithfulness and obedience of these teachers, this commandment is carried out to a greater extent than if no missionaries were teachers. They are crucial to spreading Christianity, and they are priceless in the lives of the children they touch each day.

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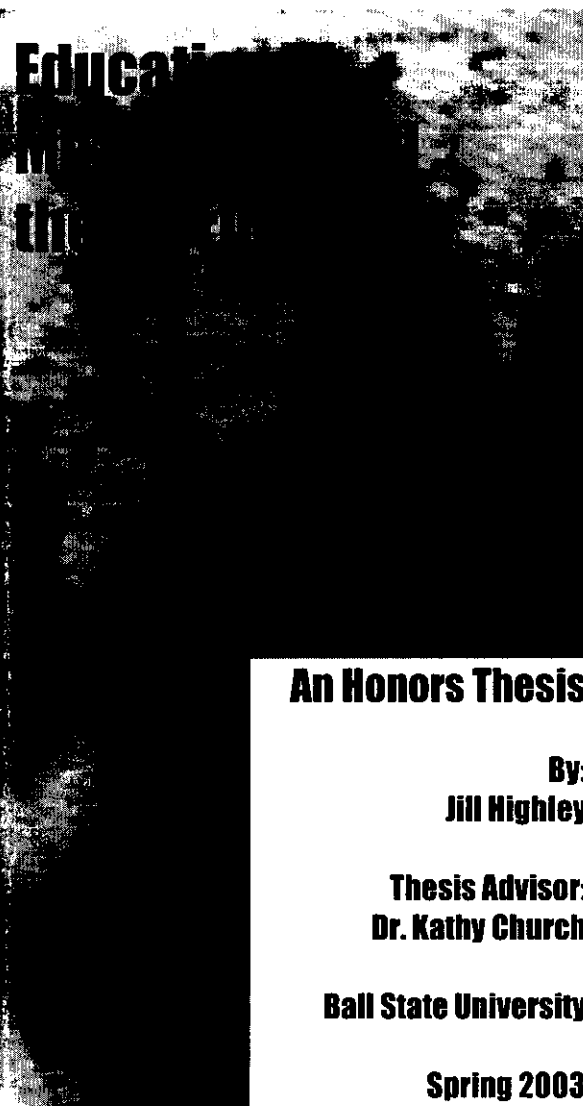
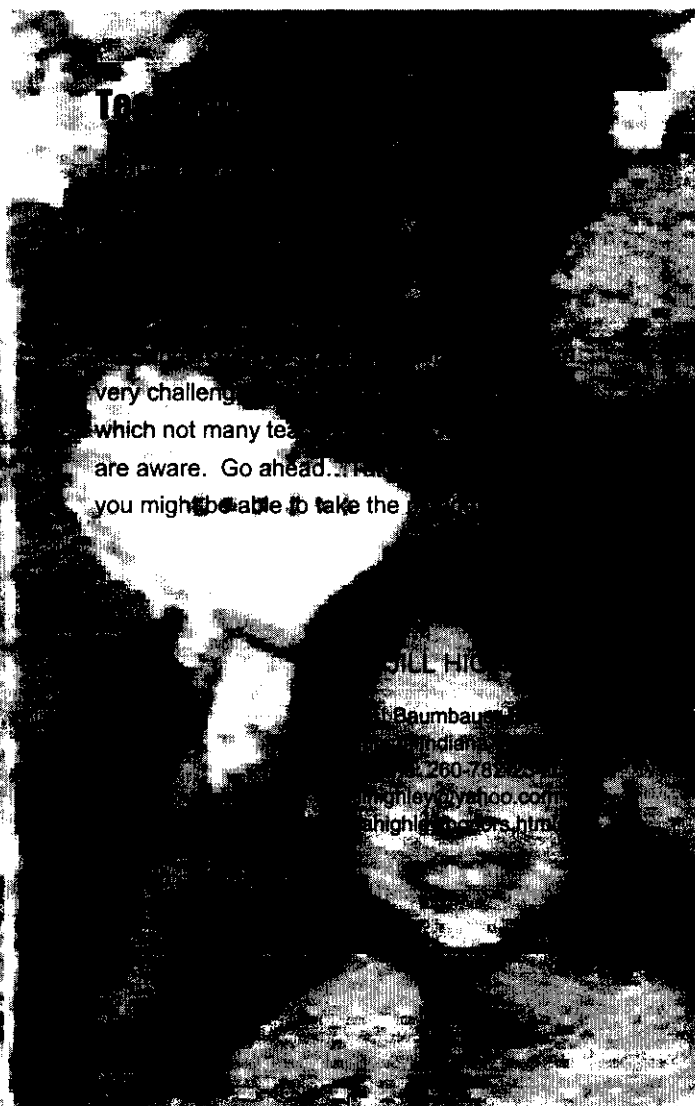
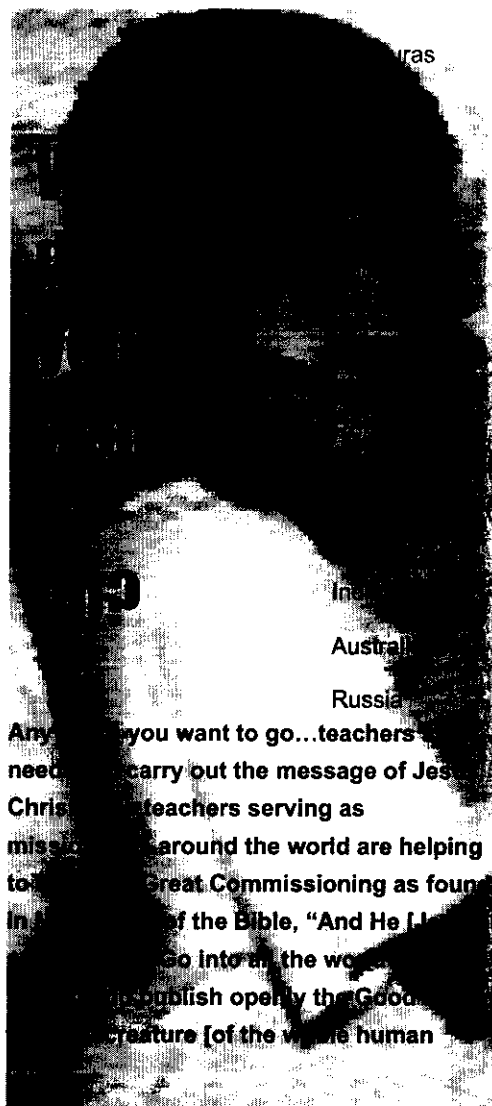
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An Honors Thesis

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Spring 2003

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Honors Thesis, Spring 2003

Two Schools...

Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center

The Santa Cruz Christian Learning Center in Santa Cruz, Costa Rica, serve as a center of education for missionaries working in the country as well as ministering to local students. This school is recognized by higher education institutions in North America.

Students and teachers in this school only speak English and are the only school in the area.

Gospel Mission, Gospel Ministry, and South America. The school is for the children of missionaries who are always in the area and here...Check it out! Supporting this ministry by donating, with finances, or by volunteering are always a possibility.

Agape Christian Academy

Three schools from a local area have been formed in the last few years called Agape Christian Academy. The schools are in San Rafael, San José, and Maricao, and are growing at rapid rates each year.

The need for teachers here is very great; they do not even have a teaching license. All, however, have a strong desire to bring the Gospel to the people of this land.

Students and teachers here are from all over the world.

Schools are open to students from Honduras, as well as from the United States.

The school teaches preschool through school grade level. The curriculum is a source of Jesus, math, language, history, and science.

How Will You Help Spread

Visit www.bsu.edu/web/iahiahlev/honors.html for more information.